



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series II: Harold P. Manson File (Zionism Files), 1940-1949, undated.

Sub-series A: Main Manson File, 1940-1949.

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Rober, Elmo, 1945.

Roper

1945

WHAT PEOPLE ARE THINKING

By ELMO ROPER

U. S. Jews' Stand on Palestine

Mr. Roper, well known authority on public-opinion surveys, also conducts the "Fortune" magazine polls.

One of the knottiest problems facing President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee at their recent conferences was undoubtedly the issue of Palestine and a Jewish state. This is no new issue, but the plight of the Jews, particularly in Europe, has been highlighted and made more acute by Hitler's persecution of them.

The question has long been regarded as one full of political dynamite in the Near East. It has from time to time, been the subject of political debate in the United States, and the statement has sometimes been made that even the Jews in the United States were split nearly evenly for and against the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In an effort to find out what American Jews actually did think on this subject, a nation-wide survey was recently taken among Jews only. No effort was made to gather opinions as to the merits of the conflicting Arab and Jewish claims. Opinions were asked only on the question of whether such a state would be good or bad for the Jews themselves. The results show an overwhelming majority believing that the establishment of such a state would be good. Respondents were asked:

Here are two statements. Please tell me with which one you most nearly agree:

1. A Jewish state in Palestine is a good thing for the Jews, and every possible effort should be made to establish Palestine as a Jewish state, or commonwealth, for those who want to settle there.

2. Jews are a religious group only and not a nation, and it would be bad for the Jews to try to set up a Jewish state in Palestine or anywhere else.

	Pro Jewish state P.C.	Anti Jewish state P.C.	Un- decided P.C.
Total	80.1	10.5	9.4
By Age:			
21 to 34.....	77.9	13.6	8.5
35 to 49.....	79.1	12.4	8.5
50 and over..	82.9	6.0	11.1

By Economic Level:

Prosperous ...	73.9	17.5	8.6
Upper middle..	75.4	14.6	10.0
Lower middle..	84.1	8.0	7.9
Poor	79.3	8.8	11.9

By Geographic Area:

Northeast ...	81.0	9.9	9.1
Middle West ..	80.1	11.4	8.5
South	67.0	18.5	14.5
Far West	83.2	5.8	11.0

By Language Ability:

Speaks English well	78.9	12.1	9.0
Speaks English brokenly ...	84.3	4.6	11.1
Does not read English	80.0	7.6	12.4

The fate of the Jews in Poland and elsewhere on the continent obviously has made a deep impression on Jews in this country. Interviewers reported that practically every person questioned not only had knowledge of the existence of the issue but had already made up his mind as to which side of the controversy he was on. It is interesting to note that the greatest opposition to the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine comes from those American Jews who are economically well off and, by their command of the English language, show long residence here—often many generations. The largest vote in favor of such a state comes from those who are poor and who, by their lack of command of the English language, show either recent migration here or migration within at least one generation. These Jews undoubtedly feel closer to the problems of the dispossessed Jews of Europe and are therefore more anxious to see that some haven is provided for them. Interviewers also reported that some of the more well-to-do Jews who voted against the idea of a Jewish state wanted to make it plain that it was through no lack of sympathy with the dispossessed Jews of Europe but rather because of a feeling that the existence of a separate Jewish state would only serve still further to set Jews apart from people of other religions.

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